

Marlene Dortche - Secretary

FCC

Office of the Secretary

445 12th Street SW

Washington DC, 20554

(202)-418-1600

Received & Inspected

APR 19 2011

FCC Mail Room

This is in regards to the potential sale of the local PBS television station affiliate, WMFE-TV in Orlando, Florida (digital channel 23 and old analog 24). The FCC file number is BALEDT-20110401ACW which was filed on 4/6/2011. The CEO of WMFE is Jose' Farjardo. As a former employee of WMFE with inside knowledge of the station, I would like to express my opposition to this transfer of license before the 30 day comment period is over. It is not in the public interest or convenience and thus should be declined.

"Community Communications" holds (but does now own) the license to operate these 4 non-profit, non-religious, educational, community television channels in Orlando. It has agreed to sell them for just \$3 million to "Community Educators of Orlando". This name is a "code name" for a religious organization in Dallas, Texas called, "Daystar Television Network" with founder Marcus Lamb. That front name alone tells you they are trying to get the sale approved sneakily by using a sneaky name. According to the sale, they would get the television license, four channels in WMFE's bandwidth, the transmitter, the antenna and master-control equipment. WMFE would also sublease the tower to the buyer.

WMFE has been broadcasting in Orlando since 1965. It has been a staple for local, educational public television that no one else in Central Florida delivers. On March 28, 2011, without telling PBS or even opening it up for public discussion, WMFE's board of directors secretly voted to sell the WMFE-TV station (but keeping the 90.7 FM radio station WMFE for themselves). WMFE's 'lay board of directors' was hand-picked by Jose' Farjardo. Basically, they show up every so often, are given some papers to look at and then vote on it. They oversee the station, but the station is not owned by anyone. It is a community asset.

The strongest reasons I am challenging the sale are as follows:

1. WMFE was awarded by the government a license to operate local, educational, non-religious commercial free non-profit programming. By transferring the license to a Dallas based religious operation violates that understanding in every manner. If WMFE cannot afford to stay in business, then it should transfer to others that can afford to. It should not go to an out of state religious organization. As WMFE's license comes up for renewal in May of 2011, a

No. of Copies rec'd
List A B C D E

0+1

better fit might be to award the frequency to the University of Central Florida. This would follow the mandate that was set forth about the programming when WMFE originally obtained the channel.

2. No one really owns WMFE. No one holds any stock. No one bought the station. All of its assets were donated by individuals, companies or from the government. WMFE uses "Community Communications" as its name, but in actuality, this is just for legal purposes. WMFE's board of directors is chosen by the CEO. They are a "Lay Board" with no real say or involvement. It is a local community asset. They have no more right to sell it than I have to sell you the sun and the moon. They legally cannot sell what they do not own. It was set up this way 40 years ago just in case someone down the line could not do what Farjardo is trying to do today. The founders of WMFE, which stands for 'W Mid Florida Education', had the foreknowledge to see that someone may try to stray away from their mandate. They set up the company with no owners so it could not be sold or transferred.
3. The building, transmitter, master control, studio and all equipment was paid for by grants from various government agencies for local public non-religious broadcasting. Most of this was from a series of grants from the state of Florida or the Federal government. This government money was not intended for a religious organization. That would be a violation of church and state. They do not have the right to sell or lease out this equipment to anyone. There are laws governing the sale of this property which probably involves a public auction. This is not equipment that can be transferred to anyone. WMFE has not contacted the government agencies about the sale. In the past WMFE refused to sell off equipment because of government regulations forbidding them from doing so. Even when purchasing equipment, it has to be bid out and allow several companies to bid. They cannot just decide it's OK now when they know it's not. It would be interesting to see what the politicians would say if they knew that the TV station grants were now being sold off for purposes that they were not intended for.
4. WMFE is a nonprofit organization that is tax exempt. If sold, they would essentially be a regular corporation. This should end their tax exempt status. Leasing out the master control, studio or control room to another company would make them for-profit. If the sale is allowed, they should be forced to pay taxes like other companies. Selling equipment or leasing them out would violate their non-profit status.
5. Losing WMFE would impact millions of people. By removing a community asset, you affect many lives. It's like closing off the beach. How many people does this affect? In determining the transfer of license you have to look at what it would become. There are 14 TV stations in Orlando. 6 are religious and 8 are not. Do we really need another religious Christian station? The religious need has already been filled. Even if one of these stations goes off the air, there would still be 5 more left. If you sell off WMFE, then that would be 7 religious stations and 7 non-religious stations. By taking away a PBS affiliate you would lose a lot that cannot be replaced. WMFE has many assets that will be lost if the sale goes through. The first is the Emmy and Telly award winning local productions. There's the loss of local

jobs and accounts. Then there's the Spanish channel V-Me serving Orlando's huge Hispanic population. There are WMFE's local outreach activities. Of course, there are the non-commercial, non-religious, educational PBS programs that are aired. The lists of local community assets that will be lost are numerous. The impact on Central Florida would be enormous.

6. There would be a loss of local programming and of local jobs. WMFE has a rich history of producing high quality local programming. The list of awards is very long. Daystar is not in the business of local programming but instead syndicates their programming from Texas. This will end local programming and the jobs that go along with it for Orlando. You can already see the number of people laid off or jobs not replaced. These are people, like me, who are collecting unemployment. This creates a strain on the state and federal governments paying out benefits. These people also have mortgages and buy stuff. By taking away their paychecks, more houses will go into foreclosure. In essence it wipes out bank accounts, 401K accounts and destroys lives. I would know as this has happened to me. Don't let it happen to others.
7. WMFE is the only locally owned and locally operated TV station in Orlando. Every other one of the 14 Orlando stations are owned by companies out of state. There is a need to keep a community asset in the community. Too many stations are owned by companies in New York or L.A. This is something that we need to have here. This is the reason we have local TV and radio stations. It is for local news, weather, sports, and community affairs. By taking the last one away, we lose something that we will never get back. We need this as an identity. By transferring the license to a Dallas based organization, we lose our identity.
8. The purchase price of a television station in a top 20 market for so little and with links to Texas seems a bit odd. \$3 million? For everything? The equipment alone is worth more than that. PCS was awarded a \$3.2 million contract to design, supply equipment for and install a seven-channel SD/HD master control and digital infrastructure system for WMFE Channel 24. Heck, WMFE sold the naming right to the building a couple of years for \$1 million. That's \$1 million to just put a name on the front of the building. So selling everything for \$3 million? Something doesn't add up. Farjardo's philosophy about the low price is that PBS stations are not worth anything. As you know, the new station would not be a PBS affiliate anyways. It's the frequency that is valuable. Taken into account, the actual price should be 20-30 times higher just for the frequencies alone. It is interesting to note that Fajardo moved to Orlando, Florida from Killeen, Texas which is near where the new owners are. This is an area that should be looked into especially if Farjardo will benefit financially.
9. Dallas based, "Daystar Television Network" with founder Marcus Lamb is full of scandals and lawsuits. It is unbecoming to transfer ownership of the airways to him. The FCC has a history of rejecting ownership of stations for these reasons. Daystar is ripe in scandals. A television station owner should not be involved in these kinds of activities. A license holder must adhere to higher standards. The airwaves are public airwaves. Allowing a person to

control our local airwaves by a company ripe in scandal is not in the best interest of the community.

- http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-504083_162-20024561-504083.html
- <http://www.scribd.com/doc/51754794/Karen-Thompson-v-Daystar-Complaint>
- http://blogs.dallasobserver.com/unfairpark/2011/03/former_employee_accuses_christ.php
- <http://www.christianpost.com/news/new-daystar-lawsuit-accuses-joni-lambs-father-of-sexual-harassment-49073/>
- <http://www.benedictionblogson.com/2011/03/31/daystar-television-hit-with-third-employee-civil-suit/>
- <http://www.christianpost.com/news/ousted-christian-tv-network-takes-case-to-israeli-high-court-29374/>

Thanks you for your time. I am not sure if there is anything else that I need to do, so feel free to get back to me on this action at your convenience.

Michael Slifker

701 South Solandra Drive

Orlando, Florida 32807

WhereTheIDivides@Yahoo.com